

EXCLUSIVE **INQUEST** ADVENTURE

FORBIDDEN GROUND

An
Original
RPG
Module!

COMPATIBLE WITH AD&D, VAMPIRE and MORE!

FIVE artifacts with the power to eradicate vampires. ONE haunted house with deathtraps around every corner. NO chance of getting through this adventure unscathed.

This booklet is the companion to “Forbidden Ground,” the adventure which appears inside *InQuest**43. The following information, which includes the background story, a room-by-room description of the house and game statistics for *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, *Vampire: The Masquerade* and *Call of Cthulhu* is for the gamemaster only.

MONTAIRE'S CURSE

By the *InQuest* staff. Artwork by Paul Butler and Dave Leri.

Donello Montaire had everything—wealth, a loving family, a beautiful home—but the one thing he couldn't control was his mortality. He would die one day and all he cherished would be lost. Obsessed with the notion of immortality, he hired a group of scientists and alchemists to aid him in his quest. For this purpose, he was also able to capture and bind a vampire named Josiah, who became the focal point of his research. Josiah bitterly accepted his fate, secretly hoping that Montaire's efforts would produce something to cure his own affliction.

The entire process took over three years, but finally, Montaire was ready to test the results of his experiments. He found a “volunteer” among the local peasants and administered the drug he hoped would grant complete immortality, even beyond that of the vampire Josiah, with none of the vampiric weaknesses.

What Montaire didn't expect were the changes that affected the subject. The drug transformed the peasant, both physically and mentally, turning him into a feral, blood-

thirsty abomination. Stripped of its human reason and intelligence, the beast attacked its creators. Several of the scientists were killed before the rest managed to subdue the creature, but even then, they could not kill the monstrosity. In fact, all efforts to destroy it resulted in failure.

Ironically, Montaire had succeeded; his creation truly was immortal. However, the disastrous results made him realize that his desire was unattainable. Having come to grips with his own mortality, Montaire knew his cursed legacy—the relentless and undying freak created by his lust for life—would outlive him and all of his descendants.

Montaire realized the task that now lay before him. Abandoning his search for eternal life, he scoured the world for five artifacts—each with the power to battle the forces of darkness (see sidebar on page 3)... However, even the five artifacts bound together could not destroy the creature, so Montaire had the creature locked in his basement, imprisoning Josiah as well to bury all evidence of his crime against humanity.

Desperate and out of options, Montaire used the mystic forces powering the artifacts to erect a magical prison which restrained the creature. He secured the treasures in various rooms of the house, keeping them from would-be thieves by incorporating them into a series of traps and puzzles. Despite all his precautions, however, a rival clan broke into the house and murdered Montaire and his family. With his dying breath, the lord cursed the house and all of its inhabitants. The blood-oath had a powerful effect, binding all within the house—including the assassins—to forever protect the dwelling from intruders that might release the bane of its creator's existence.

Over the years, the legend of the haunted Montaire Estate has passed down among the locals and their descendants, enough to keep most people away. Those foolish enough to disregard the stories are left to the fate of fools....

But the house still waits, as does its immortal prisoner.

THE ADVENTURE

There are several ways to begin the adventure, but they will all take the player characters (PCs) to the same place—the Montaire Estate. The PCs work their way through the house, dealing with traps and encounters and solving puzzles, collecting artifacts in the process. Once the PCs uncover four artifacts, a door appears to the left of the foyer staircase (room #2), which heads down into the basement where the fifth treasure remains hidden.

The fifth artifact is unguarded. When it is removed, the final barrier is released, and the monster is freed. The PCs must subdue the creature and return it to its prison, but to keep it sealed, they must leave one or more of the artifacts behind—how many is up to them.

THE ARTIFACTS OF THE BRAZEN CABAL

Centuries ago, a group of wizards dedicated to the study of the undead created five powerful artifacts to fend off supernatural foes. After their deaths, the artifacts were scattered and eventually tracked down and collected by Montaire to imprison his horrible creation.



SLAYER'S STAFF: This staff possesses pointed ends and is constructed of an unnaturally hard wood that can pierce any material that is—or was once—alive. It cannot be used to cut or slash, but it can be a useful weapon if used like a light spear or pike.

DENORA'S RING: When this ring of emerald and gold is donned, the bearer becomes completely undetectable by the undead, including visually. No supernatural abilities, no matter how potent, can overcome this block.



KALORAN SUNSTONE: This brooch houses a brilliant sunstone which, when presented forcefully and focused on a target, emits a laser-like ray possessing all the effects of direct sunlight.

THE ETERNITY BOW: A hand-crafted, ornate crossbow which magically reloads after each shot is fired.

GHOST EDGE: This ethereal, two-handed ax is formed of translucent, greenish mist and balances nearly weightless in a warrior's grip. Though it passes harmlessly through normal flesh, it reaves through the corpses of the undead, dealing triple damage per strike.

MONTAIRE'S ESTATE

GETTING STARTED

Since all of the adventure takes place within the house, it can be slotted into just about any campaign. To help you, here are some suggestions for kicking off an adventure that takes the PCs to the house:

- The PCs are hired to retrieve the artifacts from the house and are offered a handsome sum with a good amount paid up front. Plus, any other treasures the PCs take from the house are theirs to keep. The employer may only be interested in the artifacts; alternatively, the employer knows the true purpose of the artifacts, and his real motive is to have the PCs release the creature.
- In a *Vampire* campaign, the PCs are sent to the house to retrieve the artifacts for use in a struggle against an opposing clan. For an added twist, the PCs might be members of the same clan that murdered Montaire.

THE HOUSE

What follows is a description of each of the rooms in the house. For details on appearance, see the maps in issue #43 of *InQuest*.

A couple of important notes for running encounters: First, each ghost, spirit, living piece of furniture, etc. is confined to the room in which it is found and will never leave voluntarily. Second, while most of the dangers in the house are designed to challenge mortal intruders, they can be equally dangerous in a *Vampire* campaign. For example, the life-sucking effect of the greenhouse (room #12) can be modified to strip strength and dexterity points from a kindred PC.

FIRST FLOOR

1. Front Porch

Any PC who touches any part of the door will have his skin begin to decay and “zombify”; as the flesh withers, huge blisters appear, swell, then burst, spraying a yolk-like goo over everyone in the party. Instinctively, party members close their eyes, and when they open them, the zombie effect has ceased and everything is back to normal. The effect is merely meant to ward off intruders, and the party can enter the house by picking the door’s lock, knocking down the front door or entering one of the windows.

2. Foyer

The main feature in the foyer is a large 4'-by-2' aquarium on the opposite wall. The water within is murky and dark; a PC who puts his face to the glass, wipes the dust off and peers through the murk will be startled as shadowy elusive shapes swim for a second near the glass, only to disappear. The only recognizable shape is a small, worn sculpture of a horse-drawn carriage on a pedestal that rises out of the water just below the glass lid of the tank; the horses have disappeared beneath the waterline. A PC who looks closely may also catch a glimmer of light off something golden at the bottom of the tank.

There is no apparent way of opening the tank. Indeed, any method the PCs try to open, move or destroy the tank is guaranteed to fail; the tank is actually a magical representation of the pool in the back of the house and reflects the contents of the pool. The tank itself cannot be entered. (See room #13 for more details on the pool.)

To the right of the main door, a series of moldy, mounted animal heads line the side corridor. As the PCs walk down this hallway, the heads moan in lament of their deaths: “No, noooooo!”, “Hunters! Run!”, “Protect my babies”, etc. They are harmless and can give no replies to questions.

3. Library

Upon first sight, this appears as a normal library, the walls lined with books of varying color and style. However, as the PCs examine the books, they notice that all of the books—while different in appearance—are *exactly* the same in content.

Each book is a tome of poems labeled “Early Mourning: Lyrics of Lament.” The books are filled with verses about death and decay—altogether an unpleasant read. They have all been penned in the same handwriting.

A PC who looks closely may notice that there is one empty spot on the bookshelf. The PCs may freely look at the books, but if they put a book back in the wrong place—anywhere but the exact spot from which they took it—a ghostly librarian appears and scolds them, returning the book to its proper location. If the PCs ask why all the books are the same, he explains that his master, Lord Montaire, was obsessed with death.



Some time ago, an adventurer stole one of the books from the library—hence the empty spot—but the librarian is certain it is still in the house. If the PCs could find and retrieve the book, he would be grateful. The book is in the adventurer’s pack in the kitchen (room #11). If the PCs discover and return it, the librarian will answer general questions about the house, but he won’t know any specifics about the rooms.

4. Parlor

When the PCs enter the game room, they discover a ghostly figure sitting at a table in the midst of a chess game. As the PCs approach, the ghost beckons to them and then to the open chair opposite him. “Care



to play? Take a seat and it's your move..." Several skeletons are piled around the table—the decayed remains of those who have accepted the ghost's challenge and lost.

The Puzzle: A PC who sits in the chair is bound to his seat until he makes a move—and this is a tricky proposition at best. The board is set such that the PC has few legal moves, and the ghost's next move will force checkmate (see picture on page 5).

The Solution: The only way to win is by cheating; the PC must illegally move the white rook and place it in a spot that will put the ghost in checkmate.

If none of your players know how to play chess, you can have the PCs make an appropriate ability or skill check to see if they realize the futility of the situation. A PC who accepts the challenge and loses will rapidly begin to age physically. Others in the room can disrupt the process by attacking the ghost, who immediately vanishes and leaves the PC aged one year for every second his companions delayed.

If the PCs defeat the ghost in chess, it lets out a hoarse shriek and melts away. The pieces on the chessboard melt with it, all except for one; the black king becomes one of the artifacts for which they're searching, the **Eternity Bow**.

5. Trophy Room

A variety of fine weapons adorn the walls in this plush room. The PCs are free to take from the selection of swords, crossbows and exotic weaponry, but if any item leaves the room, it imparts a curse on the thief. A PC will not know he is

affected until the curse manifests itself. You may choose to have the PC feel a tingle when he leaves the room as a warning.

Roll 1d6 or choose to determine the curse:

- 1: The bearer suffers a moderate penalty to all rolls when attacking with the weapon.
- 2: Undead in the area are naturally attracted to the bearer's location.
- 3: The weapon demands blood every sundown, from the owner if necessary.
- 4: When used, the weapon does an equal amount of damage to its wielder.
- 5: The bearer always believes his foe is more wounded by the weapon than it actually is.
- 6: The bearer must always act last in a combat round or sequence.

If the PC tries to discard a cursed weapon, it will re-appear in his hand when he becomes involved in combat. In all cases, the curse can only be broken by returning the item to the room.

6. Music Room

In addition to a variety of musical instruments, ranging from harps to organs, there



is a decayed corpse slumped against one of the walls. The corpse remains inactive unless one of the PCs plays an instrument with skill. If the skill check succeeds, the corpse wakes and begins to weep, hiding its face in its decomposed hands. If the PCs approach the corpse, it looks up and remarks on how sweet it is to hear quality music after so long.

The corpse presents no threat and can give the PCs helpful information if they ask. The corpse knows that all five artifacts are still within the confines of the manor. He knows that one is located in the dining room, and the ghost across the hall—cursed to always win his chess game—is the guardian of another. If the PCs ask about the impossible situation at the chessboard, the corpse remarks, “If the great composers had played by the rules, their compositions never would have been great.”

7. Ballroom

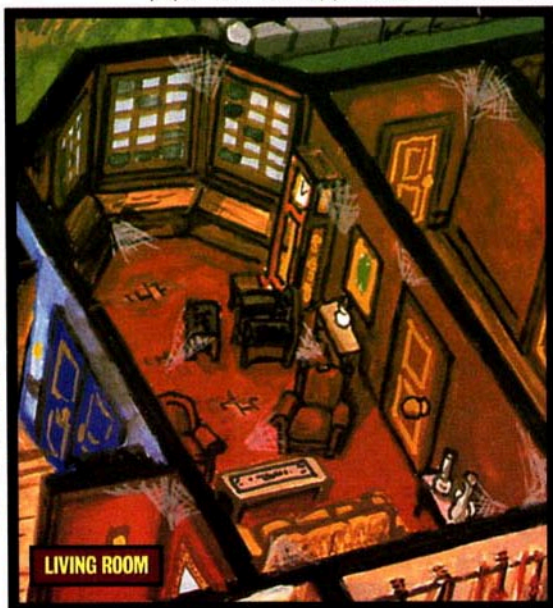
The floor to this room seems to move and shift like the air over a road on a hot day, and at first glance, the floor tiles seem to be merely a grid of black and white. However, a PC who takes a few steps back and looks at the room as a whole will see the visage of a huge face—which fills the entire room—shifting beneath the “black tiles” of the floor. This restless spirit wears expressions of pain and despair, and amidst its fading moans PCs can make out the following words: “Not treasure...beware...must understand...”

The PCs can try and converse with the

spirit, but it eventually melts back into the normal floor tiles without explaining itself further.

8. Servant's Quarters

Little remains in these sparse rooms, but there is one item of note for the PCs to find. In one of the dressers are several sheets of paper with what appears to be a roster and



schedule of the rooms which need to be cleaned. All the rooms in the house are listed—the torture room is listed as “Master’s Play Room”—and the list includes the basement. There is a grid filled with check marks next to the rooms—except for the basement, which has been crossed off the list.

9. Living Room

Any person entering this room is subject to a terrifying spectacle; shortly after a PC touches any piece of furniture in the room, all the objects slowly come to life. The “liv-

ing” furniture is unnaturally quick and powerful and blocks any attempts to leave the room. As one PC gets hit with a 200-pound dresser and another by a swatting table, the party is forced to fight its way out of the room or destroy all the furniture.

Furniture (chairs, clock, table, couch):

AD&D: 2-4 HD, 12-30 HP (12, 18, 24, 30), 18 THACO, 1-10 dmg (1d4, 1d6, 1d8, 1d10), MV 12.

Call of Cthulhu: Dex 10, HP (12, 18, 24, 30), Attacks: Bash 60% (1d6+1), Sanity Loss: 0/1d3.

Vampire: Str 3, Dex 2, Sta 4, Wits+Alertness 4, Brawl 3.

10. Dining Room

As the PCs examine this room, they notice nothing out of the ordinary for a dining area that hasn't been used in decades: Dust coats the furniture; mildew has attacked the tablecloth in spots; several old plates lie atop the table, one per PC. Should one of the PCs sit down at the dining table, however, a scene magically creates itself: Candles light the table; a ghostly butler holds a covered dessert tray at the head of the table; silverware lines new

porcelain plates, and disturbingly enough, each of the plates is covered with crawling insects.

The Puzzle: Each plate has a collection of spiders, crickets, small scorpions, beetles and a single centipede. They slither around in a frenzy, never leaving the plate, with the centipede devouring bug after bug. After a minute passes, the centipede devours the last bug and wiggles around the plate, bloated for several seconds, until all the bugs explode out of it and the whole pattern begins once again.

The Solution: Each PC has to eat all the insects in front of him. Once all the PCs “clean their plates”—whether it's eating the bugs or waiting until the centipede consumes its neighbors and then eating the gorged centipede—the ghostly waiter smiles and uncovers the dessert tray to reveal the **Ghost Edge** artifact. The tray may not otherwise be uncovered.

The ghostly waiter never communicates with the PCs and disappears after the puzzle is solved. If a PC “plays with his food”—i.e., removes a bug from a plate without eating it—all the bugs vanish and the plates reset with a full complement of insects.





11. Kitchen

The stench of decay is thick in the kitchen, and the cause is obvious once inside; several skinless zombie-like creatures—one for each PC—are hard at work preparing a corpse. A former adventurer is hanging from a meathook, and the zombies are stripping his flesh. The zombies attack any PCs who enter the room and will fight until defeated or until the PCs leave.

There are several barrels in the pantry with the by-products of the zombies' work, as well as the equipment of a former adventurer—torch, gold coins, etc. If the PCs search the adventurer's pack, they find the missing book from the library (room #3).

Skinless Zombies:

AD&D: 4 HD, 20 HP each, AC 7, THAC0 17, 2d8 dmg, MV 9.

Call of Cthulhu: Dex 10, HP 15, Attacks: Rend 30% (1d4+d6), Bite 30% (1d3), Sanity Loss: 1/1d8.

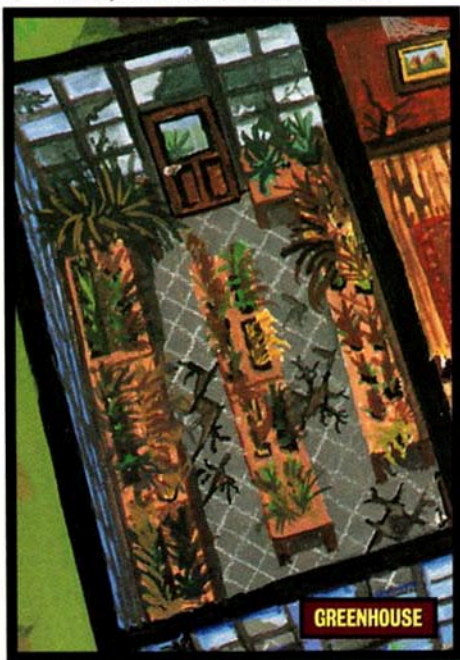
Vampire: Str 4, Dex 2, Sta 2, Wits+Alertness 5, Brawl 3.

12. Greenhouse

This extension of the house is filled with a variety of dead or dying common plants. Upon close examination, it is

easy to see that the roots are brown and the leaves are withered. After spending a few minutes in the greenhouse, the PCs notice a single red bulb, a flower that is blooming before their eyes. While this is happening, the PCs experience a feeling of warmth and life.

As the plants become greener and another flower or two begins to bloom, one of the PCs notices that another PC is looking paler and his features are withered; the plants in the greenhouse are sucking life from the PCs. The entrance to the greenhouse has vanished, obscured by the invigorated plant life. The only way to escape completely is to destroy each of the blooming bulbs; a successful hit does so. There is one bulb for each PC. If the PCs cut their way out or smash through the windows—which is easily done—and retreat, they will still feel the effects of the life-sucking flowers and will need to return or they will die in a matter of hours.





SECOND FLOOR

14. Sewing Room

Once an object is touched in the sewing room, the PCs see a strange sight: Their clothes start regressing to an archaic-looking style they may have once seen in history books. The GM should count silently in his head: For every five seconds that pass, another article of clothing/equipment disappears and is replaced by a similar old-style article: A helmet melts into a felt hat; a sword shifts into a walking stick; an amulet turns into a locket. If the PCs leave the room, the effect will not continue; however, at least one significant item—a favorite weapon or magic item—will have been changed permanently.

If the PCs continue a search of the room, they eventually find a book in the room's sewing cabinet which contains page after page of designer patterns for costumes of all sorts. The last few designs are those of the PCs' clothes, and if the pages are torn out, the PCs' clothing and equipment revert to normal.

15. Master Bedroom

The PCs may notice, with amusement, the mirror over the king-size canopy bed, but this feature plays an important role in the room. While the PCs are exploring, they feel occasional poking and prodding, which soon grows into rougher slashing and clawing as a PC notices that the jabs are causing him to bleed.

The PCs are being attacked by invisible spirits—one for each PC—and the attacks persist until the PCs defeat the spirits or leave the room. The only way to see the spirits is by looking in a mirror, where their reflections do appear—stretched-out, translucent goblins with spindly arms and

13. The Pool

As mentioned in the description of the foyer (room #2), the pool harbors the actual contents of the fishtank, including a treasure chest that contains the **Slayer's Staff**. The water in the pool is dark and murky and the surface is covered with algae, making it impossible to tell what lies beneath the surface. PCs who examine the area notice that a horse-drawn carriage, similar to the one in the fishtank in the foyer (#2), has collapsed into the pool.

There is nothing wrong with the water, but anyone those submerging themselves in the pool will be attacked by giant eels that infest the waters.

Giant Eels (6):

AD&D: 3+3 HD, 18 HP each, AC 6, THACO 15, 1d6 dmg, MV 15 (Sw).

Call of Cthulhu: Dex 16, HP 15, Attacks: Bite 40% (1d6), Sanity Loss: 0/1d4.

Vampire: Str 2, Dex 2, Sta 2, Wits+Alertness 4, Brawl 3.

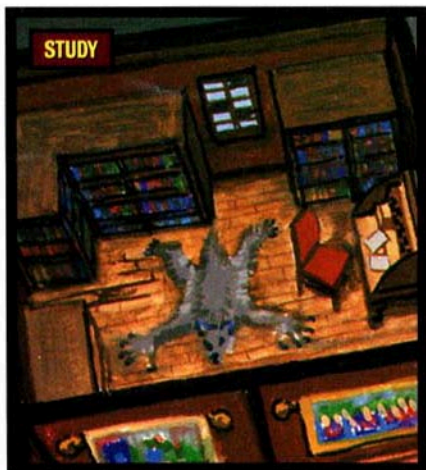
legs, vicious claws and a face with no physical attributes save a huge, tooth-filled maw. Note that there is also a free-standing full-length mirror in the room, which the PCs can strategically position to aid their fight.

Shadow Spirits (4):

AD&D: 3+3 HD, 18 HP each, AC 1 (invisibility), THAC0 17, 1d4+1 dmg, MV 12.

Call of Cthulhu: Dex 15, HP 18, Attacks: Match 16 vs. Con, loser loses 1d6-1 str, con or int. Sanity Loss: 1/1d8.

Vampire: Str 3, Dex 3, Sta 2, Wits+Alertness 5, Brawl 4, Obfuscate 4.



16. Study

There is nothing special about the study, except the werewolf-skin rug that rests on the floor. While the rug itself does nothing, it conceals a lever that opens a secret door to the torture room (room #17). The floor panel that houses the lever is directly beneath the creature's maw, and one need only move the rug to reveal it. PCs exploring the desk may find cryptic notes about Montaire's "experiment."

17. Torture Room

This room is filled with devices that inflict pain, and the experiences once suffered here have left their mark. A constant, subdued moaning and faint cries of pain still linger in the room.

While there are plenty of things for the PCs to explore, what really matters is the 3' high stone face sculpted into the wall. The sculpture is of an executioner leering at the





instruments of pain before him, mouth open in what appears to be a howl of joy.

The Puzzle: Another of the artifacts the PCs need, **Denora's Ring**, is deep within the sculpture's mouth. All they have to do is reach inside and pull it free... except, the stone face is magically animated to chomp down on anything inserted into it, causing enough damage to maim PCs and break any sort of item. A clue is etched into the stone next to the face:

*What is found in the heart of a knave,
And always waits at the end of a cave?
What covers the depths of the ocean floor,
And without, the stars would be seen no more?*

The Solution: The answer to the riddle is "darkness." If the PCs extinguish all light sources, the magical stone guardian cannot "see," and a PC can reach in safely and pull out the ring. There is no other way for them to retrieve the item.

18-21. Guest Rooms

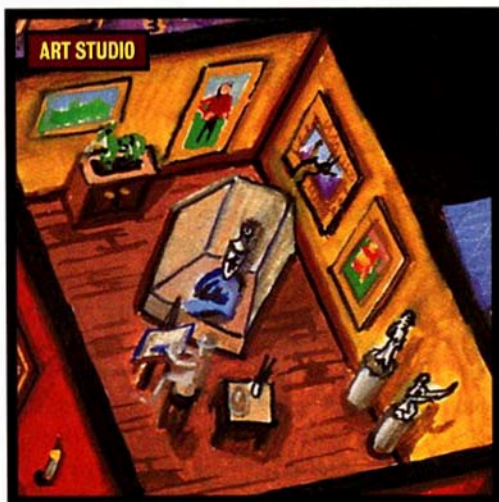
The first item of interest the PCs will find with these rooms is that the locks are on the *outside*. The two rooms closest to the stairs are open, but the two at the end of the hall are locked. The locks can be picked with difficulty or the heavy oak doors can be broken down. In each room, the PCs find the

decayed, skeletal remains of a "guest." In one room the guest's fingers are wrapped around the bars at the window, while in another room a spinal cord hangs by a noose tied to the rafters, the rest of the body's bones fallen in a pile beneath. Each of the rooms also contains moth-eaten travel bags and some jewelry.

22. Art Studio

When the PCs enter this room, they notice a ghostly figure working at a canvas at the far end of the room. As the PCs approach, the ghost looks up, cackles through a toothy grin and then vanishes. Whoever looks at the painting sees an image of himself looking at the painting, and there is a large, muscle-rippling, snarling monster standing behind him, about to attack. Sure enough, when the PC turns around he sees the monster. Others cannot warn him; it only appears when the viewer turns away from the painting.

How the PCs react next will determine what they need to do. If their initial instinct is to fight the monster, their efforts will be futile; they must destroy the painting instead. If their initial reaction is to destroy the painting, then they must fight the monster until they defeat it.



Painted Demon:

AD&D: 7 HD, 38 HP, AC 4, THACO 13, 2d6+2 dmg, MV 15.

Call of Cthulhu: Dex 15, HP Special (Painting has 4), Attacks: Claws 30% (1d6+1d4), Sanity Loss: 1/1d6.

Vampire: Str 4, Dex 4, Sta 3, Wits+Alertness 6, Brawl 4, Celerity 1.

23. Children's Room

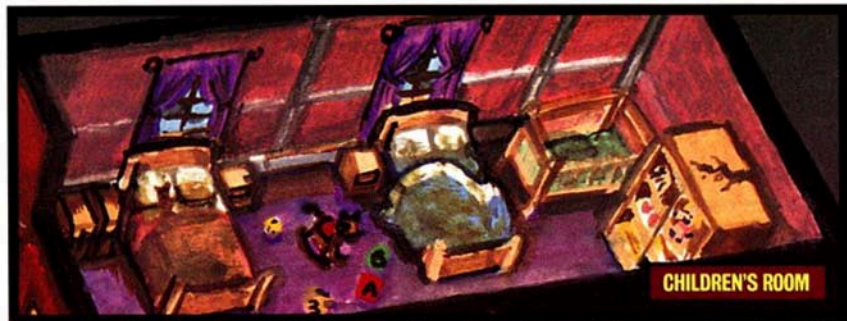
The most interesting feature in this room is a shelf filled with 10-inch dolls. Among the figures on the shelf are doll-replicas of the PCs, identifiable as such because they are wearing the same clothes as the PCs, even though the faces do not have any significant details.

Shortly after this discovery, ghostly children come running over (appearing out of nowhere) and grab the dolls from the shelves. The children begin playing, paying no attention to the PCs. They are non-corporeal, as are the dolls once they take them, so there is nothing the PCs can do to disrupt them.

The children use the PC dolls to act out some of the events that have taken place earlier in the module. For example, if one of the PCs exclaimed, "All these books are the same!" while in the library, one of the children has the appropriate doll speak those exact words. If the PCs were stumped in any room, the gamemaster should act out the room's scene and drop in some clues to help the PCs out.

Ultimately, the children act out whatever the PCs are currently doing. If the PCs shut up and stand back to watch, the children move on to a new scene, where all of the PCs die a grizzly death at the hands of a ghostly and monstrous grim reaper. The children then vanish, leaving the dolls on the ground. The dolls are now scarred and coated with painted-on blood, their clothes ripped and torn. If the PCs try to pick up any doll, it disintegrates in their clutches and turns to dust.

Ultimately, the children act out whatever the PCs are currently doing. If the PCs shut up and stand back to watch, the children move on to a new scene, where all of the PCs die a grizzly death at the hands of a ghostly and monstrous grim reaper. The children then vanish, leaving the dolls on the ground. The dolls are now scarred and coated with painted-on blood, their clothes ripped and torn. If the PCs try to pick up any doll, it disintegrates in their clutches and turns to dust.



FINAL ENCOUNTER

THE FINAL STOP

Once the PCs have recovered all the artifacts in the main section of the house, they gain access to the basement. As soon as the fourth artifact is removed from its resting place, a door appears to the left of the foyer stairs—the black area on the map (area #2). The door is heavily locked and barred, but it can be broken down with a good amount of effort. A set of old, wooden stairs leads down into darkness.

Once downstairs, the PCs discover the remains of Montaire's laboratory and workshop. Other than a few tables and benches with scattered beakers and vials, little remains. There are, however, two items of note:

On the far wall, there is a solid oak door. Because of the magical protection of the one remaining artifact, it is impossible to bypass the door or wall around it by any means. The other noteworthy find is a glass cabinet on the right-hand wall which houses the fifth artifact, the **Kaloran Sunstone**. There are no tricks, no traps. All the PCs need to do is open the cabinet and take the brooch. However, doing so releases the final lock of the monster's prison.

Seconds after the brooch is removed, the door on the far wall opens, and a gaunt humanoid figure stumbles into the room. It is the vampire Josiah, released after over 60 years of imprisonment. If the PCs move to attack or draw their weapons, he feebly raises a hand.

"I'm of no threat to you..." If the PCs back off, he continues. Josiah speaks quickly, realizing it is only a matter of minutes before the creature breaks through his cell. He explains that they don't have much

time—that by removing the artifacts, they have unlocked the cell of a creature that has been imprisoned for decades.

Josiah explains as much of the backstory for which he has time, but before he has a chance to finish, read or paraphrase the following text:

Abruptly, the vampire stops and you hear a faint rumbling. Seconds later, the wall bursts, spraying stone and mortar. A blue-gray hairy monstrosity emerges from the rubble, its demonic red eyes burn with hatred. Josiah lets out a breath, and then turns to face the creature. With blinding quickness, it leaps at the vampire, taking him down in one fell swoop.

At this point, combat is likely to start. If the PCs choose to run, the creature chases after them and a groggy Josiah screams after them that the consequences are on their heads. If they manage to escape, skip to the aftermath. Otherwise, continue the combat until the creature is subdued.

When the battle is over, a battered Josiah calls to the PCs. He tells them that they must return the creature to its prison before it regenerates, and explains that only the power of at least one of the artifacts will keep the creature contained. He tells the PCs they can keep the rest, but then, the next group of adventurers that comes may just release the monster again. What the PCs choose to do is up to them. Josiah asks only that they use the Slayer's Staff on him, ending his tormented existence.

The Aftermath

The PCs are free to choose whatever course of action they desire. If they choose to replace one or more of the artifacts, they may do so without difficulty. As soon as an artifact is returned to the place from which it was taken, that trap/puzzle resets.

If the PCs ran from combat or took all five artifacts, they may not have to deal with the creature immediately, but they will have to live with the knowledge the creature is free and on the prowl. The PCs may even become the target of other artifact hunters who have tracked down their prizes. If the PCs have avoided "doing the right thing," it should come back to haunt them in some way; how is up to you.



MONTAIRE'S MONSTER. A creature that cannot be killed—the only way to defeat it is to give up what you have strived so desperately for.

MONTAIRE'S MONSTER

AD&D

HD:	12
HP:	80
AC:	2
THACO:	10
ATTACKS:	2
DMG:	2d8/2d8
MV:	18
SZ:	Large
INT:	Low (5-7)
XP:	16,000

Call of Cthulhu

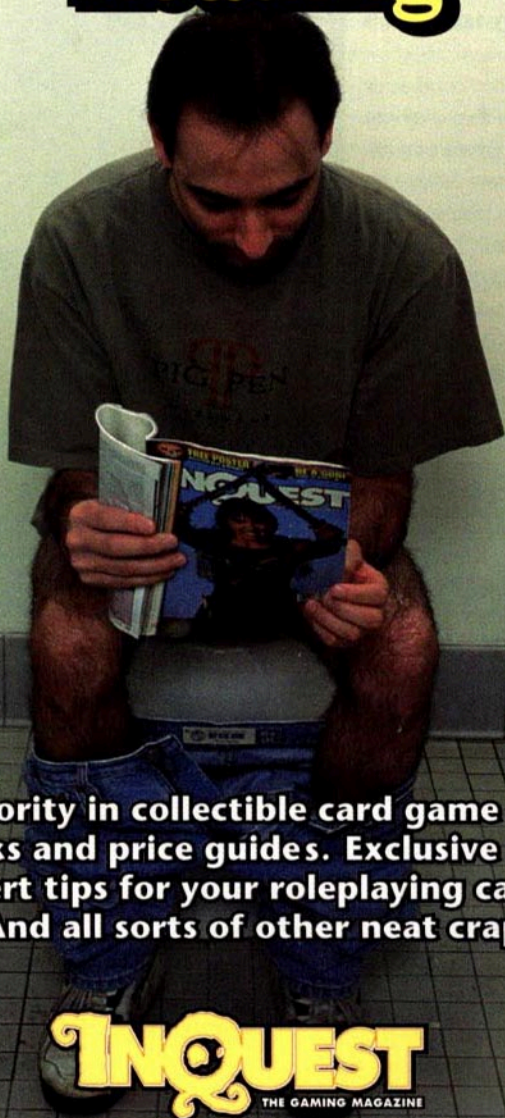
STR:	18
CON:	30
SIZ:	19
INT:	14
POW:	27
DEX:	15
HP:	25
ATT:	2 Claws 90%
DMG:	1d6+1d6
S. LOSS:	1d3/1d20

Vampire

STRENGTH:	5
DEXTERITY:	5
STAMINA:	6
WITS:	3
ALERTNESS:	5
AUSPEX:	1
CELERITY:	5
FORTITUDE:	5
POTENCE:	3
PROTEAN:	2

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Cannot be harmed by normal weapons, regenerates 3 hp/1 health level per round, damage is aggravated, immune to mind-affecting abilities.

Great Bathroom Reading



The authority in collectible card game strategy, killer decks and price guides. Exclusive adventures and expert tips for your roleplaying campaigns. And all sorts of other neat crap.

INQUEST
THE GAMING MAGAZINE

Monthly from Wizard Entertainment